

**RECEIVED
CENTRAL FAX CENTER**

OCT 03 2008

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-19. (Cancelled)

20. (Previously Presented) A unit for feeding products in an ordered succession, comprising a conveyor unit with pockets in receipt of products from a dispensing device and extending thence along a predetermined path to a transfer station, an outfeed conveyor by which products are directed in succession and at constant pitch toward a user machine, and a transfer unit operating between the conveyor unit and the outfeed conveyor, wherein the conveyor unit comprises a first belt and a second belt placed one beside the other and set in motion by independent drive means, and the pockets are arranged in first and second groups alternated one with another along the predetermined path, each comprising a given number of pockets ordered at constant pitch and associated respectively with the first belt and second belt; in that the transfer unit comprises means by which products are ejected from the pockets and transferred at predetermined intervals to the outfeed conveyor, and in that the movement of the first and second belts is governed by a control unit in such a way as to establish a predetermined phase relationship with the operating frequency of the ejection and transfer means; wherein the ejection and transfer means comprise an elevating platform, set in motion cyclically by respective drive means, such as will remove the products fed by the conveyor unit at a selected pitch.

21. (Previously Presented) A unit for feeding products in an ordered succession, comprising a conveyor unit with pockets in receipt of products from a dispensing

device and extending thence along a predetermined path to a transfer station, an outfeed conveyor by which products are directed in succession and at constant pitch toward a user machine, and a transfer unit operating between the conveyor unit and the outfeed conveyor, wherein the conveyor unit comprises a first belt and a second belt placed one beside the other and set in motion by independent drive means, and the pockets are arranged in first and second groups alternated one with another along the predetermined path, each comprising a given number of pockets ordered at constant pitch and associated respectively with the first belt and second belt; in that the transfer unit comprises means by which products are ejected from the pockets and transferred at predetermined intervals to the outfeed conveyor, and in that the movement of the first and second belts is governed by a control unit in such a way as to establish a predetermined phase relationship with the operating frequency of the ejection and transfer means; wherein the transfer unit further comprises auxiliary transfer means operating in conjunction with the ejection and transfer means.

22. (Previously Presented) A unit for feeding products in an ordered succession, comprising a conveyor unit with pockets in receipt of products from a dispensing device and extending thence along a predetermined path to a transfer station, an outfeed conveyor by which products are directed in succession and at constant pitch toward a user machine, and a transfer unit operating between the conveyor unit and the outfeed conveyor, wherein the conveyor unit comprises a first belt and a second belt placed one beside the other and set in motion by independent drive means, and the pockets are arranged in first and second groups alternated one

with another along the predetermined path, each comprising a given number of pockets ordered at constant pitch and associated respectively with the first belt and second belt; in that the transfer unit comprises means by which products are ejected from the pockets and transferred at predetermined intervals to the outfeed conveyor, and in that the movement of the first and second belts is governed by a control unit in such a way as to establish a predetermined phase relationship with the operating frequency of the ejection and transfer means; wherein the conveyor unit comprises hold-down belt positioned at least in the vicinity of the ejection and transfer station and delimiting a passage of height substantially identical to that of the products.

23. (New) A unit as in claim 20, wherein the elevating platform is capable of alternating vertical movement between a lowered first position of alignment with the conveyor unit in which the products are received, and a raised second position in which the products are released to the outfeed conveyor.

24. (New) A unit as in claim 20, wherein at least the drive means of the paired belts and the drive means of the elevating platform are interlocked to the control means.

25. (New) A unit as in claim 21, wherein each pocket is created between a pair of mutually opposed shaped supporting elements secured to one respective belt and cantilevered to overlap the other belt.

26. (New) A unit as in claim 25, wherein the auxiliary transfer means comprise a transport belt positioned, at least in a vicinity of the transfer station, along the predetermined path and above a platform by which the products are ejected from the conveyor unit.

27. (New) A unit as in claim 26, wherein the transport belt occupies a space between upright members of the supporting elements, to advance interposed between the ejection and transfer means and the products during ejection.

28. (New) A unit as in claim 26, wherein the transport belt extends along the predetermined path, running parallel with and between the first and second belts of the conveyor unit, and raised above these same belts at least along the part of the path extending between the dispensing device and the entry to the transfer station.

29. (New) A unit as in claim 28, wherein the conveyor unit comprises a hold-down belt positioned at least in the vicinity of the ejection and transfer station and delimiting a passage of height substantially identical to that of the products.

30. (New) A unit as in claim 29, wherein the outfeed conveyor includes a conveyor belt positioned with an initial stretch above the ejection and transfer station and having a succession of recesses equispaced at a selected pitch, each furnished with suction means serving to retain the products.

31. (New) A unit as in claim 30, wherein the transport, outfeed and hold-down belts are driven by common drive means.

32. (New) A unit as in claim 28, wherein the transport belt extends beyond an end of the conveyor unit in a feed direction, supported slidably by a table, and operates in conjunction with a hold-down belt positioned above the table.

33. (New) A unit as in claim 32, wherein at least the drive means of the paired belts and the drive means of the elevating platform are interlocked to the control means.

34. (New) A unit as in claim 33, wherein the drive means of the transport, outfeed and hold-down belts are also interlocked to the control means.

35. (New) A unit as in claim 29, wherein the transport, outfeed and hold-down belts are driven by common drive means.

36. (New) A unit as in claim 26, wherein the transport belt extends beyond an end of the conveyor unit in a feed direction, supported by a table, and operates in conjunction with a hold-down belt positioned above the table.